TRANSITIONING STUDENT VETERANS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT OF AN UNDERSERVED POPULATION ON CAMPUS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

APRIL KROWEL

DISSERTATION ADVISOR: MOLLY TSCHOPP, PH.D.

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

JULY 2017

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This dissertation is dedicated to all the current military service members, the veterans who have served this country, and those who encourage them to achieve their potential. Thank you for the sacrifices you have made, and continue to make, for our freedoms.

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Introduction

Young adults who move from home to attend college experience a transition period in which they must renegotiate their relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles (e.g. Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012; Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995). Historically, researchers have examined general college adjustment for both traditional (e.g. Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996) and non-traditional students (e.g. Bean & Metzner, 1985), minority populations in the United States (e.g. Anglin & Wade, 2007), student athletes (e.g. Melendez, 2006), women (e.g. Lopez, Campbell, & Watkins, 1986) and trauma survivors (e.g. Banyard & Cantor, 2004). Additionally, college adjustment of returning World War II (WWII) veterans (e.g. Bound & Turner, 2002) and veterans attending community college (e.g. Persky, 2010) have been examined. However, the literature regarding college adjustment of student veterans- specifically, veterans of Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF), Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and New Dawn (OND)- has been lacking.

Few studies have examined recent returning war veterans' college adjustment experiences. The limited research includes an empirical analysis of the role of social support in student veterans' adjustment to college (Ingala, Softas-Nall, & Peters, 2013), but that study only compared deployment history and posttraumatic stress diagnoses with a student veteran population and neglected to compare the results with nonveteran students. Other studies have examined mental health concerns of student veterans but researchers tend to combine active duty (AD) and National Guard/Reserve (NG/R) components into one sample when comparing the student veteran population to nonveteran students (e.g. Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011). Combining AD and NG/R components is likely necessary due to smaller student veteran sample sizes compared to nonveteran students (e.g. Krowel, 2012). However, given that

active duty military personnel are immersed in military culture full-time, it might be expected that these individuals will experience greater difficulty adjusting to a college atmosphere than their NG/R counterparts.

Additionally, research has found that women tend to experience greater difficulty transitioning to college (e.g. Lopez et al., 1986; Kenny & Donaldson, 1992) yet studies examining college adjustment differences between women veterans and male veterans have been lacking. Considering that approximately 26% of student veterans are women (Bonar & Domenici, 2011), an increase in understanding about this specific sub-group is imperative in assisting them in their transition to college. The purpose of the proposed study is to conduct an empirical analysis that not only examines the college transition experience of student veterans compared to nonveteran students but also seeks to answer the following questions: Do AD student veterans experience greater difficulty in their transition from military to academic life compared to NG/R student veterans and nonveteran students? Do women veterans experience greater difficulty in their college adjustment transition than their male counterparts? The *Theory of Adult Transition* (Schlossberg, 1984) and *Culture Shock Theory* (Oberg, 1960) will be integrated to serve as the theoretical foundation of the study.

College Adjustment for Traditional Students

College adjustment has been defined as a combination of psychological distress and the personal, social, and academic areas of students' roles (Hurtado et al., 1996). College selectivity refers to the level of academic ability of the students. College size may be important because large campuses tend to be more diverse, however, smaller campuses may help students feel like they are not an anonymous part of a community. The actual distance from home does not seem to be a factor, but rather the perception that the distance is "the right distance" (Hurtado et al., 1996). The Hurtado et al. finding supports previous research that found students are better

adjusted to college when they are able to be independent, but also receive psychological support from parents (Anderson & Fleming, 1986).

Research has also demonstrated that, on average, college freshmen are more psychologically dependent on their mother and father, and have poorer social and personal adjustment to college than their upperclassmen counterparts (Lapsley, Rice, & Shadid, 1989). Additional studies have also examined the role of spiritual well-being (e.g. Schaffner, 2005). Considering that college adjustment is not limited to a few factors among freshman students but rather many elements, it is reasonable to hypothesize that student veterans' transition to academic life will also not be limited to a few factors.

College Adjustment of Minority Populations

With regard to the present study, student veterans tend to be in the minority on college campuses throughout the United States (U.S.), representing roughly three percent of all undergraduate students (Department of Veteran Affairs [DVA], 2014). Additionally, many students could be considered non-traditional students, which account for a slight minority of approximately 43% of all undergraduate students in the U.S. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). For the purpose of this study, veteran status will be considered a minority status. Therefore, a brief review of the literature on racial and ethnic minorities, women and trauma survivors, and non-traditional students is needed because these populations are most relevant.

Racial and Ethnic Minorities

For the most part, research related to college adjustment and transition for racial and ethnic minority populations has been focused on enrollment and attrition rates (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Choi, 2002; Hurtado et al., 1996). Anglin and Wade (2007) found that "internalized

multicultural racial identity" (p. 213) was associated with better overall college adjustment among African American students. Additionally, African American students might experience other issues, such as perceived discrimination and financial strain that could affect college adjustment (Anglin & Wade, 2007). In general, financial stress is a common theme for racial and ethnic minority students. Hurtado et al. (1996) found that Hispanic students tended to have greater levels of stress related to financial concerns than White students. Hurtado and colleagues (1996) also found that Hispanic students were less likely to be socially adjusted in the second year of college. Among Korean American students, dependence on parents is positively correlated with better overall college adjustment (Choi, 2002). Perhaps dependence on parents is favorable due to the collectivistic nature of Asian culture.

Women and Victims of Trauma

Research suggests that the structure of the family plays a role in college adjustment for both men and women. However, for women, perceived high level of individuation tends to be correlated with college adjustment. Lopez et al. (1986) found that females were less independent than males, and for women, lower separation scores were significantly related to higher depression scores. Similarly, Kenny and Donaldson (1992) found among women, conflictual independence, or low levels of anxiety, guilt and resentment of parents, were negatively correlated to college adjustment. Female students face unique social problems with adjusting to college such as pressure from parents to follow traditional career paths and find a romantic partner (Baxter-Magolda, 1999), and institutional sexism (Sands, 1998). These unique challenges may affect how women adjust to the overall college experience.

Women often become victims of abuse and violence, so many studies examining women and college adjustment include traumatic experience as a variable. Banyard and Cantor (2004)

examined traumatic experiences among college students and found that greater traumatic exposure was correlated to more negative academic and personal-emotional adjustment scores for both male and female survivors. Given that veterans might have experienced trauma during their time in service, it is possible that they experience greater difficulty with adjustment to college than their nonveteran counterparts.

Non-Traditional Students

Historically, researchers have combined older and part-time students (i.e. non-traditional students) with traditional students in studies of attrition. However, some studies have found that non-traditional students usually have work, family, *and* community obligations (Chartrand, 1992) and different motivations for attending college than traditional students (Justice & Dornan, 2001). Ross (1988) found that non-traditional students typically attend college due to intrinsic motivation rather than the external motivation of their traditional student counterparts. In addition, non-traditional students tend to report lower levels of academic achievement-related anxiety (Nunn, 1994; Yarborough & Schaffer, 1990). Considering that student veterans are typically categorized as non-traditional students, it is reasonable to hypothesize that they might also experience greater difficulty adjusting to the social aspect of campus life.

Student Veterans on Campus

Students who have military- and combat- experience are a minority group on campuses throughout the U.S. As previously mentioned, the DVA (2014) reported that over one million (approximately three percent) of all undergraduate students are veterans. This number has increased from approximately 500,000 in 2009 and 660,000 in 2012, and is expected to continue to increase by 20% in the next few years (DVA, 2014). After living within a culture such as the military, it would not be surprising to find differences in how the student veteran population

adjusts to college compared to nonveteran students. Researchers have found that student veterans are more mature, more academically focused, and less likely to seek academic support than their nonveteran counterparts (Livingston, 2009) but also likely to feel uncomfortable with others knowing about their veteran status (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008).

It has also been suggested that student veterans feel significantly different from their peers and that bolsters a sense of aloneness (Zinger & Cohen, 2010). Student veterans tend to be more self-reliant than their nonveteran counterparts (Livingston et al., 2011), which might lead to an increase in perceived invisibility. This perceived invisibility could affect perceived connectedness and belongingness. Loneliness and an inability to relate with classmates could also lead to less perceived social support. Additionally, these self-reported experiences likely influence other dimensions of college adjustment (i.e. academic, personal-emotional, institutional attachment).

National Guard and Reserve Students

NG/R student veterans experience greater difficulty with transitioning to college than nonveteran students (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009). Their experiences can be impacted by their military responsibilities (e.g. training, deployment). In addition to typical concerns about academic obligations, NG/R students are on constant alert waiting for potential deployment orders. These students' experiences are based on three phases related to their military obligation: pre-mobilization (e.g. waiting for orders), separation (e.g. time spent at training site and deployment), and return (e.g. reintegration from deployment). Additionally, the NG/R operated as a *strategic reserve* prior to 9/11, in which their deployments were limited to no more than six months for each five years of inactive drill, if they deployed at all. Since 9/11, the NG/R has been viewed as an *operational force* in which deployments can last up to 24

months with a 24-month rest period before deploying again (S. A. Edwards, personal communication, October 27, 2012). In this context, NG/R veterans might have committed to the military prior to 9/11 and as a result, were likely inadequately prepared for such a stark difference in the mission(s) that followed. The process by which the NG/R student veterans operate could influence their college adjustment.

Women Student Veterans

Women currently comprise approximately 15.3 percent of the U.S. active duty force, compared to 2.5 percent in 1973 (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009; Defense Manpower, 2016). Women also make up 19.6 percent and 15.2 percent of the total force in the Reserves and National Guard respectively (Women in Military Service, 2010). It is estimated that 27% of student veterans are women (DVA, 2014). It has been suggested that because women are forced into the male-dominant culture that is the military, they might struggle with redefining their identity after their service (Dunivin, 1997); women veterans are often unsure of how to navigate life as a civilian, a veteran, a woman, and a student (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009). Additionally, women veterans often do not find same-gender role models because of the lack of women veterans among faculty and staff. As a result, the transition to college could be difficult for women student veterans.

Mental Health Concerns

Student veterans experience an adjustment period and, as a group, experience alarming rates of mental health issues compared to nonveteran students (Rudd, Goulding, & Bryan, 2011; Wood, 2012). Of the more than 2 million troops who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan, as many as 35 percent may be experiencing symptoms of PTSD (CAP, 2010; DVA, 2016). Further, 347,942 service members have sustained a TBI during their military service thus far, with the

number almost guaranteed to rise with ongoing deployments (Defense and Veterans, 2016; Hoge, Goldberg, & Castro, 2009). Women veterans are also more likely to suffer from PTSD but are less likely to be diagnosed than men; women tend to be diagnosed with depression or anxiety (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009).

Veterans tend to experience greater difficulty in their social lives than their civilian counterparts. Twenty percent of married service members were planning a divorce and 42 percent of returning soldiers and Marines felt like a guest in their own home (CAP, 2008). According to Price and Stevens (2013), male veterans with PTSD report poorer family adjustment than veterans without PTSD including higher levels of parenting issues, more anxiety with intimacy, and higher rates of separation and divorce. Additionally, recently discharged veterans might experience great difficulty with gainful employment (Erbes, Kaler, Schult, Polusny, & Arbisi, 2011). Employment difficulties vary based on each veteran; however, college or university life could be affected for those who experience unemployment or other employment-related concerns. Sayer et al. (2011) noted that unemployed veterans reported more community reintegration difficulties than employed veterans.

Considering the rates of mental health concerns and interpersonal difficulties, it is not surprising that researchers and clinicians are worried about an increased suicide risk in veterans. Data from 22 states suggests that 22 veterans and one active duty service member per day die by suicide, with an overall rate for veterans being 22 per 100,000 (Kemp & Bossarte, 2012). When data from 48 states is considered, the rate is closer to 30 per 100,000 among veterans compared to 14 per 100,000 among civilians (Hargarten, Burnson, Campo, & Cook, 2013). According to Scoville, Garder, and Potter (2004), the most common type of traumatic death suffered during military training is suicide, and male veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide than their

nonveteran counterparts (Kaplan, Huguet, McFarland, & Newsom, 2007). Risk factors of suicide within this population include marital issues, unemployment or financial strain, no support system, and prior suicide attempts (Regan et al., 2005).

Theoretical Foundation of College Adjustment for Student Veterans

Theory of Adult Transition

According to the Adult Transition Theory (Schlossberg, 1984), transitions can be anticipated or unanticipated, an event or nonevent, as long as it alters one's life. Individuals who experience transitions also experience changes in assumptions about themselves and the world around them. Examples from a military context might include an *anticipated event* as choosing to leave the military after 20 years, an *unanticipated event* as receiving deployment orders, an *anticipated nonevent* as expecting deployment orders but not receiving them, and an *unanticipated nonevent* as receiving orders to change duty station but they get canceled. DiRamio and colleagues (2008) adapted the Schlossberg et al. (1989, 1997) "Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out" (p. 80) model to their study examining the transition process for student veterans. According to DiRamio et al. (2008), their findings "fit neatly into the model" and described the complexities of transitioning student veterans. Similar to Schlossberg et al. (1989, 1997), DiRamio's adapted model focuses on how individuals (in this case, student veterans) experience a change in assumptions about themselves and their behaviors, relationships, and environment. They identified 16 overall themes throughout their model and added an additional "moving in" transition that signified transitioning to college.

The most salient transitional issue that emerged for DiRamio et al.'s (2008) sample was experiencing difficulty with peer and institutional connection. Many veterans reported of a "socialization strategy" (p. 88) called "blending in" (p. 88), in which they attempted to be quiet

and neutral. This was especially the case for veterans taking political and social science courses, which tended to bolster feelings of being unwelcomed and out of place (DiRamio et al., 2008; Livingston, 2009; Livingston et al., 2011). One recent study found that veterans want to be connected academically, socially, and with campus life but often do not have the tools necessary to find a sense of belonging (National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], 2010).

Culture Shock Theory

Oberg (1960) coined the term "culture shock" in which individuals have experienced anxiety resulting from losing all familiar signs and symbols. Culture shock has traditionally been applied to individuals who have moved from one country to another; however, researchers have recently examined this phenomenon through the lens of student veterans (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007; Carne, 2011; Coll, Weiss, Yarvis, 2011; Glasser, Powers, & Zywiak, 2009). After all, the military certainly qualifies as its own culture. DiRamio and colleagues' (2008) model adaptation posited that veterans experience culture shock as a result of leaving the military and re-entering the general population and campus culture. Carne (2011) argued that student veterans experience "reverse culture shock" (p. 5) when they reintegrated into the civilian world while transitioning to the college atmosphere. According to Carne, service members returning home must reconcile newly gained identities, lifestyles, and values with the demands and realities of their home. These individuals may experience withdrawal, feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and interpersonal concerns. Additionally, Anderson and Mason (2009) stated that cultural reintegration may be seen in every area of a returnee's life, including transitions, health, emotions, and home life.

Campus culture (e.g. tempo of academic life, clash of values, faculty attitudes, accessibility issues, collegiate expectations) can be especially difficult for veterans to transition

into post-military service. Glasser et al. (2009) found that veterans in their sample felt like they had to change their speech (e.g. cursing), tolerate disrespect in the classroom (e.g. talking/texting during lectures, complaining), and field questions about how many people they killed while in combat (i.e. confirmed kills). Student veterans who have struggled with adapting to the new culture of college will likely also experience great difficulty with college adjustment.

Integrating Adult Transition Theory and Culture Shock Theory

As previously mentioned, the current study will combine adult transition and culture shock theories to provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the college adjustment process of student veterans. Schlossberg et al.'s (1989, 1997) adult transition model and the subsequent adapted model (DiRamio et al., 2008) provide explanation for general transitions and specifically student veterans' transitions. However, culture shock/reintegration theory might further explain *why* student veterans experience greater difficulty with "Moving In…Again" (DiRamio et al., 2008) stage of the transition process when reintegrating into civilian life and enrolling in college (Carne, 2011; Coll et al., 2011; Oberg, 1960).

Definition of Terms

Active Duty student veteran: A student who served in the military on Active Duty. This student has completed his or her military obligation, and is attending college post-military service.

National Guard/Reserve student veteran: A student who currently serves or has served in the military in the National Guard or Reserves. This student may or may not have completed his or her military obligation. This student may or may not have experienced deployment while attending college (thus having to withdraw from classes).

Nonveteran student: A student who has not served in the military, and therefore, has never had a military obligation.

Purpose and Rationale

While a significant body of literature has been devoted to understanding how young men and women transition to college, there is less emphasis in the literature on how members of the military adjust to college. In the proposed study, I will attempt to fill a gap in the literature about how veterans adjust to the college atmosphere, and how veterans' experiences differ from the average nonveteran college student. The focus of this study is on the college transition experiences of the student veteran population and women student veterans compared to male veterans, as few researchers have examined the college transition difficulties of these groups. The results of this study will provide important implications for research and practice for an overlooked minority group that is often struggling with mental health and social concerns, in addition to college adjustment issues.

One purpose of the current study is to understand further how veterans' experiences shape how they transition to college. This will be accomplished by studying nonveterans' college adjustment as compared to veterans. To date, there has been no other quantitative study specifically comparing AD veterans and nonveterans on college adjustment. The research has been limited to the experiences of the National Guard and Reserves. Moreover, the current study will examine the differences between female veteran and male veteran college adjustment and transition. Further, this study will have an integrated theoretical foundation to provide a framework for student veterans' transition from military to academic life.

Given the limited quantitative research of student veterans who transition to college campuses all over the country, this specific research is warranted. The current study will broaden our knowledge of the needs of these specific populations. Knowing what veterans struggle with during their transition to college might help college counselors and administrators understand

how to assist veterans on campus. This is especially critical if veterans' college adjustment differs significantly from traditional, nonveteran college students. Moreover, a quantitative study examining the college adjustment for veterans on campus provides an important step toward investigating the generalizability of the needs of student veterans.

Research Question and Hypotheses

Research Question. Does college adjustment vary based on gender and military status?

Hypothesis 1. College adjustment (as measured by scores on the SACQ) will be different for men and women based on military status (nonveteran/veteran) once the effect of age has been removed.

Hypothesis 2. College adjustment (as measured by scores on the SACQ) will vary for males and females once the effect of age has been removed.

Hypothesis 3. Overall, female students regardless of military status (nonveteran/veteran) will report more difficulty with adjusting to college (as measured by scores on the SACQ).

Method

Participants

Of the 300 original participants, 236 passed the attention check question, which involved answering with a predetermined response. Almost 65% of total respondents (n=194), who were undergraduate college students enrolled at various universities across the United States, completed all questions within the survey. Of these persons, 153 (78.9%) were women and 41 (21.1%) were men. They ranged in age from 18 to 54 (M = 22.25, SD = 5.39) and were predominantly White, non-Hispanic (82.6%) followed by Black or African-American, non-Hispanic (7.7%), biracial/multiracial (5.6%), Asian (0.5%), and those self-identified as "other" (3.6%) with responses including "Middle Eastern" and "Pacific Islander." Thirteen participants

(6.8%) reported being of Hispanic/Latino(a) descent. The majority of the sample was single (49.5%), followed by "in a committed relationship but not married" (41.4%), married (8.6%), and divorced (.5%). Seventeen participants self-identified as having a disability; responses included both physical and mental health concerns. Seventy participants (36.1%) identified as being a first-generation college student. One hundred and sixty-seven (86%) were nonveteran students and 27 (14%) were student veterans.

Most participants (73%) were enrolled in universities within the Midwestern region of the United States, specifically the East North Central division comprised of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The majority (69%) attended Ball State University in Indiana. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the participants' demographic characteristics and geographical location. Of the 27 veteran participants, 78% had been deployed and of those who had deployed, approximately 24% were deployed three or more times. Table 3 summarizes student veteran participants' military characteristics.

Measures

All participants completed an online survey comprised of demographic questions and the college adjustment questionnaire described below. Students who identified as being a veteran completed an additional student veteran questionnaire.

Demographic Information Questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire asked participants about specific background information such as age, sex, race/ethnicity, yearly income, relationship and parental status, and disability status. Additionally, this questionnaire asked participants to name their college or university, whether they are enrolled in on-campus and/or online courses, GPA, and how many semesters of college they have completed.

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1984; Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985), is a 68-item Likert-type self-report inventory measuring multiple factors affecting student adjustment to college. The SACQ can also be used to identify students who are experiencing difficulty in adjusting to college. The questionnaire includes four subscales: *academic adjustment* (24 items), *social adjustment* (20 items), *personal-emotional adjustment* (15 items), and *institutional attachment adjustment* (15 items). The scale has a nine-point set of responses with anchors "applies very closely to me" (1) to "doesn't apply to me at all" (9). The SACQ is scored by totaling the four subscales and full scale, which are converted into T-scores. For the purpose of the proposed study, only the four subscales will be used. According to Baker and Siryk (1999), when participants miss an item, the scorer is able to utilize the mean replacement method. That is, when items are skipped, the averages of other responses on the specific subscales can be calculated. However, for the SACQ subscales to remain valid, participants are able to miss no more than two items on each subscale. I utilized the mean replacement method for twenty participants, and no one was filtered out for missing more than two items on any subscale.

Internal consistencies of the subscales have also been reported, with alphas of .77-.81 (personal-emotional adjustment), .89 (academic adjustment), .88-.91 (social adjustment), and .87 (institutional attachment adjustment) (Baker & Siryk, 1984). The reliability for the full scale ranged from .93-.95 (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985). In the current sample, the internal consistencies are .82 (personal-emotional adjustment), .54 (academic adjustment), .61 (social adjustment), and .44 (institutional attachment adjustment). The full scale reliability for the current sample is .84. Regarding validity, Baker and Siryk (1986) found statistically significant relationships between the subscales and several criterion variables expected to be relevant to the

subscales, including attrition, grade point average (GPA), and involvement in social activities (Asher, 1992; Baker & Siryk, 1986).

Student Veteran Questionnaire. A veteran questionnaire asked participants who identified as student veterans to report specific details of their military service, including branch of service, component of service (i.e. National Guard, Reserve, Active Duty, ROTC), pay grade, and deployment history. Additionally, this questionnaire asked open-ended questions related to participants' transition experiences from military to academic life.

Procedure

Online surveys were hosted by Qualitrics. A survey method was chosen because online surveys may lead to decreased feelings of stigmatization and enable access to unique populations (Wright, 2005). Individuals who received the recruitment letter and direct link to the online survey were able to promote and share the study as well. A snowball procedure was used via email and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Reddit) to disseminate the study. The link and a recruitment letter were disseminated to department chairs of several core subjects (e.g. math, psychology, English, and political science) at 28 four-year undergraduate institutions and their respective student veteran organizations (SVOs) as well as several organizations' listservs and social media sites, including the American Psychological Association's (APA) Division 17 military psychology special interest group, Rebel Women Vets, Wounded Warrior Project, and Student Veterans of America. I chose the undergraduate institutions based on the U.S. Census regions and divisions map, in an effort to recruit participants from across the United States rather than one region. Additionally, the survey was sent to my friends, colleagues, and family via email requesting they forward the survey link and recruitment letter to people in their contact

lists who might meet inclusion criteria for the study. Finally, participants were informed that I am an Army veteran.

As an incentive, I promised to donate two dollars for each participant's completed survey to the Pat Tillman Foundation, a nonprofit organization that invests in military veterans and their spouses through educational scholarships and other resources. Research has also shown that using lottery incentives for surveys has little impact on increasing response rate (Porter & Whitcomb, 2003), while promised charity contribution research offers mixed results (Hubbard & Little, 1988; Robertson & Bellenger, 1978). For students taking counseling psychology courses at my home university, one hour of research credit was offered as an additional incentive to complete the online survey.

Participants were directed to the study via a link, where each person was presented with electronic informed consent and chose either "I Agree to Participate" or "I Decline to Participate." Each participant completed the SACQ and Demographic Information Questionnaire in counterbalanced order to prevent an ordering effect, and participants who identified as student veterans also completed the Veteran Information Questionnaire. All measures were completed in one sitting, which took approximately 25 minutes. After completing the questionnaires, participants were presented with a debriefing statement (Appendix D) that included more information about the study, the National Crisis Line contact information, and confirmation that I would donate $2 to the Pat Tillman Foundation. Instructions were also provided on how to receive research credit for those students in counseling psychology courses.

Design and Analysis

Due to only recruiting 22 AD and five NG/R student veterans, the two categories were transformed to create a *veteran* category. This is an acceptable type of transformation and has

been found in previous literature (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008). A 2x2 multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to analyze the first two hypotheses. The independent variables were military status (nonveteran, veteran) and sex (male, female), and the dependent variables were the four SACQ subscales. Age was utilized as a covariate, given that the veteran population is likely significantly older than the nonveteran population. The advantage of performing MANCOVA over MANOVA is having the ability to incorporate one or more covariates into the analysis, and then remove the effects of these covariates (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). For the third hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was used. The independent variable was sex (male, female) and the dependent variables were the four SACQ subscales. No covariates were utilized for this analysis due to previous research not controlling for age or any other variables.

Results

Survey Validity and Reliability

One attention check question was inserted into the SACQ to capture respondent validity. Participants who answered this incorrectly were excluded from the study. The Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates for the SACQ with the current sample is .80, which illustrates good reliability (George & Mallory, 2003). The correlations between the SACQ subscales of the current sample were moderate between personal emotional and academic adjustment (.609) weakest between personal emotional and social adjustment (.177). Table 5 summarizes all subscale correlations of the current sample.

Hypotheses 1 & 2

A 2x2 MANCOVA was used to analyze the first two hypotheses. Independent variables were military status (nonveteran, veteran) and sex (male, female), and the dependent variables

were the four SACQ subscales. Aged was utilized as a covariate. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot. Homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's Test for Equality of Variances ($p = .000$) so Pillai's Trace was used as the test statistic (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). The Pillai's Trace criteria indicated significant group differences in age with respect to the social and institutional attachment SACQ subscales, Pillai's Trace $\Lambda = .124$, $F(4, 186) = 6.568$, $p = .000$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .124$. Because there was a significant difference found in the MANCOVA, a Univariate ANOVA was used to further analyze these hypotheses. The Univariate ANOVA results revealed that military status (nonveteran, veteran) significantly affected the social adjustment SACQ subscale $F(1, 178) = 5.657$, $p = .018$, $\eta^2 = .029$), but did not *significantly* affect the other subscales. The results revealed no significant interaction between military status and sex, as well as no significant main effect for differences in college adjustment between males and females. Table 4 lists the mean SACQ subscale scores by military status.

Hypothesis 3

An independent samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences in college adjustment (as measured by scores on the SACQ) between male and female college students, regardless of age or military status. There were significant differences in scores for social adjustment among females ($M = 34.630$, $SD = 3.637$) and males ($M = 36.659$, $SD = 6.908$); $t(196) = 2.603$, $p = .010$. Additionally, there were significant differences in scores for institutional attachment adjustment among females ($M = 36.760$, $SD = 3.057$) and males ($M = 37.977$, $SD = 3.933$); $t(196) = 2.179$, $p = .031$.

Supplemental Questions for Student Veterans

The principal investigator reviewed participants' responses to open-ended questions included in the veteran questionnaire. It was the principal investigator's intention to gain some insight into how student veterans feel about discussing their military service on campus, and to assess whether the proposed study's participants described similar experiences to previous studies regarding the transition process from military to academic culture (e.g. Carne, 2011; DiRamio et al., 2008; Livingston, 2009; Livingston et al., 2011). Student veterans who indicated that they discuss their military experiences in class reported the following reactions from faculty and classmates: "Positive," "Faculty usually are positive and extremely helpful; students can be hit or miss," "Most thank me for my service," and "They are surprised since I don't advertise." Of those student veterans who reported knowing fellow veterans on campus, they described those relationships as "important to remain connected to the military," "extremely positive and helpful to navigate campus and social culture," and "great to know I am not alone through the transition process." Overall, the majority of student veterans in the current sample were satisfied with their campus enrollment process, services and support systems, and veteran's offices.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the differences in college adjustment between AD student veterans, NG/R student veterans, and nonveterans enrolled at undergraduate universities within the United States. Due to recruiting a low number of student veterans, it was not possible to compare different components (AD, NG/R) so these two groups were combined into one *veteran* category. It was hypothesized that there would be an interaction in the effect on college adjustment based on military status (nonveteran, veteran) and sex (male, female) when controlling for age, and that there would be a difference in college adjustment between male and

female students when controlling for age. The results indicated a significant group differences between student veterans and nonveterans regarding only social adjustment.

In contrast with previous research (DiRamio et al., 2008; Livingston et al., 2011; Zinger & Cohen, 2010), it appears that student veterans are more socially adjusted to the college atmosphere than their nonveteran peers. DiRamio and colleagues (2008) identified peer connection as one of the most salient transitional issues for veterans when transitioning to college. Perhaps more student veterans on college campuses now compared to five or ten years ago assists in the social adjustment aspect of college. Additionally, the present study sample mostly comprised of students who had completed more than two semesters of college. It is possible that these veterans experienced challenges during the first two semesters but adjusted well after the initial adjustment. However, it is also possible that student veterans no longer experience the same social adjustment concerns discussed in prior research. If the results of the present study are any indication, student veterans are equally or better adjusted than their nonveteran peers. Further exploration of only freshman students would help to identify potential challenges that arise during the initial adjustment to college.

It is surprising that no significant group differences were found between nonveterans and veterans on levels of institutional attachment. Unfortunately, there were not enough veterans participating in the present study to be able to analyze data with regard to military capacity. It is possible differences would have existed with a larger sample of student veterans. After all, National Guard/Reserve student veterans could possibly have their education interrupted by deployment, which could, in turn create some attachment issues in relation to their respective academic institutions. Active Duty veterans, not having to worry about deployment, may not feel any more or less attachment to their institutions than nonveteran students would. Further

exploration of all military capacities of college student veterans may well produce different results.

It is also surprising that no differences were found regarding gender among nonveterans and veterans. Previous literature suggests that females who are less individuated may have more trouble with adjustment to college (Lopez et al., 1986) than those who are more individuated. Perhaps the women in this sample had similar levels of individuation; that construct was not measured in this study. In fact, it is possible no difference existed because female veterans have already developed a sense of individuation as a result of their time in the military. As noted, female role models are not plentiful in the military (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009); these women might have learned to stand on their own through that experience and simply continue to do so in college. Being in the military may prove to be a very adaptive experience for them once they get to college, even though they tend to not identify as veterans post-service. The potential difference between male and female student veterans deserves further exploration.

Additionally, it was hypothesized that female students, regardless of age or military status, would report experiencing more difficulty with adjusting to college than male students. The results indicated significant group differences between male and female students regarding social and institutional attachment adjustment, which is in congruence with previous literature (Enochs & Roland, 2006). As previously mentioned, women face unique problems that affect their social relationships on campus, which also affects their appraisal of the college environment. Perhaps the women who participated experience similar challenges that affect their sense of social connection on campus. It would certainly be worth further investigation in order to identify potential problems women face on campuses that could affect the level of institutional attachment.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study has several strengths and limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. On a positive note, the study was grounded in the integration of two empirically supported theories of adult transition and culture shock. Additionally, the use of a quantitative analysis is beneficial because it provides an avenue toward generalizability. Previous studies examining student veterans' adjustment to college have been qualitative in nature and have not compared veterans to nonveterans. The present study also used a previously validated measure that exhibited adequate reliability and validity with undergraduate students at all levels not only freshman students (Baker & Siryk, 1999). Additionally, the study was designed to access participants across the United States rather than one region or state, which assists with overall generalizability of the results. Another strength of this study is that while the veteran response rate of the current study (14%) was not what I had hoped for, it was higher than the national proportion of veterans in the undergraduate population, which is approximately 3%.

However, the study's design also has several notable flaws. First, it relied on self-reports to gather information. Self-report measures are subject to social desirability responding, which confounds research results by creating or obscuring relationships between variables (van de Mortel, 2008). Therefore, participant responses may not be an accurate reflection of their experiences. Piggybacking from there is the concern that self-reported GPA may be associated with level of academic adjustment of the current sample. Additionally, student veterans appear to be difficult to reach via online survey. It might be worthwhile to utilize a mixed-methods approach to build initial rapport. Admittedly that approach also has its own challenges. Another limitation is the unequal cell size, which led to violations of homogeneity of variances.

Another significant concern is related to the sample demographics. The sample was comprised of mostly female nonveteran participants and those living in the Midwestern region, specifically in the state of Indiana. These results likely do not accurately capture the college adjustment experiences of males or students in other geographical locations. This is a concern due to the amount of potential resources for all students, but particularly student veterans who may or may not attend a university that is readily accepting of military experiences or appreciates diversity in ways that allow all students to feel more attached to the university environment. The lack of geographical representation was probably due to the additional incentive of course credit for students at my home university. Due to limited number of veteran participants, there is high risk that the results do not reflect the experiences of the larger student veteran community. Of the 27 veteran participants, only six were female, which likely affected the results related to gender differences. Replicating the present study with a larger, more representative sample of veterans and male nonveterans would be useful and could produce very different results.

Implications

Although the conclusions drawn from this single sample should be viewed with caution, the results of this study have clinical and research implications. The current study revealed significant group differences between nonveterans and veterans only on the social adjustment scale; however, the mean SACQ subscale scores might have clinical implications regarding which students should seek counseling services on campus. According to Baker and Siryk (1999) students with subscale scores of 40 or below might benefit from counseling. With the exception of the *personal-emotional* subscale for veterans, all mean subscale scores are less than 40. These

results suggest that if college administrators and counseling centers were to adhere to Baker and Siryk's (1999) guidelines, they would be seeing more students regardless of veteran status.

Recruiting student veterans for research purposes appears to be a challenge. The recruitment of more AD and NG/R student veterans would allow future researchers to statistically compare these two groups rather than combine them into one category. Until future studies are able to recruit more veterans in these separate categories, it might not be possible to know if there are any significant differences in how these two groups adjust to college compared to nonveteran students.

Future research might evaluate the different clusters of the SACQ subscales. Within the different subscales, there are four clusters for *academic adjustment*, four clusters for *social adjustment*, two clusters for *personal-emotional adjustment*, and two clusters for *institutional attachment adjustment*. Four particular clusters that would be interesting to compare between veterans and nonveterans are: *motivation* (attitudes toward academic goals and academic work required, sense of educational purpose); *social environment* (satisfaction with the social aspects of the college environment); *psychological* (sense of well-being); and *general institutional attachment* (feelings about being in college in general). Given the results of the present study, I would expect to find that, on average, student veterans would report equal or higher scores on these clusters compared to nonveteran peers. Additionally, future studies may consider how to integrate the research into structured freshman activities, such as orientation, in order to reach more freshman students.

Concluding Comments

The present study aimed to fill a gap in the literature regarding how the college adjustment experiences differs between student veterans and their nonveteran peers. The study

found that on average, student veterans are significantly more socially adjusted than nonveteran students, which is not congruent with previous literature. Additionally, this study indicated that female students report significantly more difficulties with adjusting socially and to the college environment than male peers. Future research is needed to determine whether student veterans are now reporting similar difficulties as their nonveteran peers. Further, more research is needed to assess the unique social and environmental difficulties among female students. I hope that future research can assist in identifying both veterans and nonveterans who experience difficulties while in college, and interventions can be tailored to support those who need services on campus.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Sample by Military Status

Demographic Information	Military Status	
	Nonveteran (n=167)	Veteran (n=27)
Age		
18-21	128	4
22-25	32	3
26-29	3	10
>30	4	10
Sex		
Male	20	21
Female	147	6
Race		
White, Non-Hispanic	137	24
Black or African-American, Non-Hispanic	14	1
Asian	1	0
Two or more races	11	1
Other	7	0
Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic	155	0
Hispanic	12	1
Relationship Status		
Single	83	13
Committed, but not married	79	1
Married	4	13
Divorced	1	0

Table 2

Geographic Location of Sample by Military Status

Geographic Location	Military Status	
	Nonveteran (n=167)	Veteran (n=27)
Western Region		
Pacific	3	0
Mountain	19	1
Midwestern Region		
West North Central	1	1
East North Central	131	11
Southern Region		
West South Central	11	6
East South Central	0	2
South Atlantic	0	2
Northeastern Region		
Middle Atlantic	2	4
New England	0	0

Table 3

Military Characteristics of Sample (n=27)

Military Characteristic	N	%
Branch		
Army	17	63%
Marine Corps	4	15%
Navy	4	15%
Air Force	2	7%
Capacity		
Active Duty	22	81%
National Guard/Reserves	5	19%
Number of Deployments		
Zero	6	22%
One	7	26%
Two	9	33%
Three or more times	5	19%
OEF/OIF veteran		
Yes	20	74%
No	7	26%
Know other student veterans on campus	21	78%

Table 4

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) Subscale Scores by Military Status

	Military Status			
	Nonveteran (n=167)		Veteran (n=27)	
SACQ Subscales (Adjustment)	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Academic	31.43	0.52	32.11	1.06
Social***	34.13	0.49	36.81	1.00
Personal-Emotional	38.97	1.11	40.35	2.28
Institutional Attachment	36.90	0.39	37.87	0.79

Note: Low score = area of difficulty (score range = 25 - 63)

*** $p < .05$

Table 5

Correlations Between the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) Subscales

	Academic	Social	Personal Emotional	Institutional Attachment
Academic	1.000	0.304	0.609	0.355
Social	0.304	1.000	0.177	0.505
Personal Emotional	0.609	0.177	1.000	0.425
Institutional Attachment	0.355	0.505	0.425	1.000

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Appendix A – Literature Review

Transitioning Student Veterans: An Empirical Analysis of College Adjustment Of an Underserved Population on Campus

It can be assumed that the college experience is completely different from the high school experience. Budding adults sometimes travel thousands of miles across the country, away from friends and family, to expand their knowledge base. They are transplanted to new locations that are exciting, but oftentimes unknown. Some individuals are better able to adapt, while others find adjusting to college more difficult. There has been a history of researchers investigating general college adjustment, as well as the college adjustment of minority populations in the United States, including African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Korean American students (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Choi, 2002; Hurtado, Carter & Spuler, 1996). Researchers have studied the college adjustment of student athletes (Melendez, 2006), women (Lopez, Campbell, & Watkins, 1986; Kenny & Donaldson, 1992), and trauma survivors (Banyard & Cantor, 2004). Yet, very little is known about college adjustment for veterans, which will be the focus of the current study. Researchers have examined college adjustment of war veterans in the United States (U.S.). However, these studies have been mostly limited to veterans of World War II (WWII) (Bound & Turner, 2002; Garmezy & Crose, 1984) and veterans adjusting to the community college atmosphere (Persky, 2010; Rumann, 2010). Recently, Ingala, Softas-Nall, and Peters (2013) examined the role of social support in student veterans' adjustment to college, but only compared deployment history and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnoses and symptomology within the student veteran population.

With the exception of the Ingala et al. (2013) study, research has been limited to comparing the nonveteran student population to National Guard/Reserve (NG/R) and male

student veteran populations (Bauman, 2009; Johnson, 2009; Rumann & Hamrick, 2009). This limited research has examined mental health concerns (e.g. PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), depression) of student veterans, regardless of gender or branch. Additionally, research tends to combine active duty (AD) and NG/R components into one sample when comparing the student veteran population to nonveteran students. Combining AD and NG/R components might be necessary due to smaller student veteran sample sizes compared to nonveteran students (e.g. Krowel, 2012). Due to the limited research examining the college adjustment of AD and female student veteran populations, some questions to still remain: Are there differences in the college adjustment experiences of AD student veterans compared to NG/R student veterans and nonveteran students? Additionally, does the college adjustment experience differ between male and female student veterans of each component? If there are differences in college adjustment, are there unique military experiences that play a role in the transition process (e.g. combat deployments, mental health concerns)? The current study will examine college adjustment among various populations, and military- and gender-specific issues that student veterans experience. Lastly, a theoretical foundation that combines both adult transition theory and culture shock theory will be presented.

College Adjustment for Traditional Students

College adjustment has been defined as a combination of psychological distress and the personal, social, and academic areas of students' roles (Hurtado et al., 1996). College selectivity refers to the level of academic ability of the students. College size may be important because large campuses tend to be more diverse, whereas smaller campuses may help students feel like they are not an anonymous part of a community. The actual distance from home does not seem to be a factor, but rather the perception that the distance is "the right distance" (Hurtado et al.,

1996). The Hurtado et al. finding supports previous research that found students are better adjusted to college when they are able to be independent, but also receive psychological support from parents (Anderson & Fleming, 1986). Researchers have found that college freshmen are more psychologically dependent on their mother and father, and have poorer social and personal adjustment to college than their upperclassmen counterparts (Lapsley, Rice, & Shadid, 1989). For students who perceived they had social support from family and peers, negative life stress, psychological separation from parents, and spiritual well-being accounted fro 33.9% of the variance in college adjustment (Schaffner, 2005). Moreover, researchers found positive feelings about separation, among students, was a better predictor of college adjustment than psychological independence from parents (Rice, Cole, & Lapsley, 1990). In short, college adjustment is not limited to a few factors. Rather, many elements are predictors of positive adjustment to this new experience.

With regard to the current study, student veterans are typically in the minority on college campuses, representing roughly three percent of all undergraduate students in the United States (U.S.) (DVA, 2014). Additionally, many student veterans could be considered non-traditional students, which account for approximately 43% of all undergraduate students in the U.S. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). For the purposes of this study, veteran status will be considered a minority status. Therefore, a brief review of the literature on racial and ethnic minorities, women and trauma survivors, and non-traditional students is needed because these populations are most relevant to the current study.

College Adjustment for Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Research on college adjustment for minorities has focused on enrollment and attrition rates (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Choi, 2002; Hurtado et al., 1996). Some studies examined the role

that racial identity plays in college adjustment. One study that investigated African American students' college adjustment found an "internalized multicultural racial identity was the only racial identity dimension that was associated with better overall adjustment to college" (Anglin & Wade, 2007, p. 213). Individuals who identified with this identity usually embraced their African American identity while feeling connected to other cultures. These feelings could lead to overall satisfaction with personal and social areas, which may contribute to better college adjustment. Anglin and Wade (2007) also found that African American students might have to deal with other issues that could affect college adjustment, such as perceived discrimination and financial strains. In general, financial stress might be a common theme for minority students. Hurtado et al. (1996) found that Latinos tended to have greater levels of stress related to financial strain than White students. They also found that Latinos were less likely to be socially adjusted in the second year of college. Choi (2002) found that among Korean American students, dependence on parents was positively correlated with college adjustment. Perhaps dependence on parents is favorable because collectivism is an important aspect of their society. Parents from collectivistic cultures are more willing to support their child's emotional demands because strength of family is engrained in their lives (Choi, 2002).

College Adjustment for Women and Victims of Trauma

Research suggests that the structure of the family plays a role in college adjustment for both men and women. However, for women, perceived high level of individuation tends to be correlated with college adjustment. Lopez et al. (1986) found that females were less independent than males, and for women, lower separation scores were significantly related to higher depression scores. Similarly, Kenny and Donaldson (1992) found among women, conflictual independence, or low levels of anxiety, guilt and resentment of parents were negatively

correlated to college adjustment. Protinsky and Gilkey (1996) suggested "the individuated young woman is often the best adjusted woman" (p. 291).

Because women often become victims of abuse and violence, many studies examining women and college adjustment include trauma. Female victims of trauma tend to suffer from sexual abuse, dating violence, witnessing violence, or traumatic loss (Banyard & Cantor, 2004). In their study, Banyard and Cantor (2004) found that female survivors have significantly higher peer attachment, posttraumatic meaning making, and satisfaction with social support than male survivors. Perhaps, women seek out those social support systems to protect them from future traumatic experiences. Not surprisingly, they also found that greater traumatic exposure was correlated to more negative academic and personal-emotional adjustment scores for both male and female survivors. And so, it is possible that veterans, especially female veterans, have witnessed trauma during their service, and might experience greater difficulty with adjustment to college than nonveterans.

College Adjustment for Non-Traditional Students

Non-traditional students have been defined as students, aged 25 and older, who live off campus, and attend classes part-time (Bean & Metzner, 1985). However, Pelletier (2010) argued that nontraditional students are not a homogenous group. They range in age from 25 to 75 and may work full-time *or* part-time, or might not be working at all. Non-traditional students could be parents and/or taking care of other dependents. They might be working toward a first career or reassessing after being laid off from a previous job. Pelletier (2010) also mentioned that non-traditional students could even be students transitioning to college from military service, which is relevant for the current study.

In the literature, older and part-time students (i.e. non-traditional students) have been lumped in with traditional students in studies of attrition. However, researchers have found that non-traditional students usually have work, family, and community obligations (Chartrand, 1992) and different motivations for attending college than traditional students (Justice & Dornan, 2001). Ross (1988) found that non-traditional students typically attend college due to intrinsic motivation rather than external motivation of their traditional student counterparts. In addition, non-traditional students tend to report lower levels of academic achievement-related anxiety (Nunn, 1994; Yarborough & Schaffer, 1990).

Student Veterans as a Minority Culture on Campus

Students who have military experience (especially combat deployments) are a minority group on campuses throughout the U.S. As previously mentioned, the DVA (2014) reported that over one million (approximately three percent) of all undergraduate students are veterans. This number has increased from approximately 500,000 in 2009 and 660,000 in 2012, and is expected to continue to increase by 20% in the next few years (DVA, 2014). After living within a culture such as the military, it would not be surprising to find differences in how the student veteran population adjusts to college compared to nonveteran students. One study found that student veterans were more mature, more academically focused and less likely to see academic support than their nonveteran counterparts (Livingston, 2009). A qualitative study of 25 recent Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) combat student veterans found that they were likely to feel uncomfortable with others knowing about their veteran status (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008). Another study conducted at a Midwestern university supported DiRamio et al.'s findings and found that veterans chose not to discuss their military service

because they did not want to draw attention to their status and they felt weird or out of place bringing it up (Krowel, 2012).

Unfortunately, student veterans have been overlooked as unique minority groups on campuses and numerous studies have highlighted how veterans often feel invisible when attending college. Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, and Fleming (2011) suggested that military influence was a factor in veteran invisibility. Due to their maturity, humility, and pride, veterans tended to be deliberate about disclosing their status to classmates, faculty, and staff. Additionally, student veterans tend to be more self-reliant than their nonveteran counterparts (Livingston, Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011), which might lead to an increase in perceived invisibility. This perceived invisibility could affect perceived connectedness and belongingness. Researchers at a community college found that student veterans felt significantly different from their peers and that bolstered a sense of aloneness (Zinger & Cohen, 2010). Loneliness and an inability to relate with classmates leads to less perceived social support; however, research suggests that student veterans rely on one another as a means of support (Livingston et al., 2011). As previously stated, veterans represent a small minority of students on campus, and as a result, they might not be knowledgeable about classmates' veteran status.

The current study will not only examine differences between student veteran and nonveteran students, but also differences between NG/R students and student who served on AD, in addition to differences between male and female student veterans. The following sections will discuss specific challenges associated with each of these groups.

National Guard and Reserve Students

A thorough examination of the empirical literature yielded multiple studies that explored college transition difficulties for OEF/OIF NG/R students (Bauman, 2009; Bonar & Domenici,

2011; Ingala, Softas-Nall, & Peters, 2013). National Guard students serve in either an Army or Air Force unit for their state, while Reserve students are service members that may be affiliated with an Army, Air Force, Navy, or Marine unit from another state. The Reserves includes students participating in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). According to Bonar and Domenci (2011), ROTC students are the most visible on campus due to the requirement of wearing a uniform on multiple occasions throughout any given academic week. Additionally, while ROTC students have committed to military service, they have not yet served in the military and are not at risk for deployment. For these reasons, the current study will not include ROTC students.

In contrast to ROTC students, NG/R students are typically not in uniform while on campus. NG/R student veterans experience greater difficulty with transitioning to college than nonveteran students Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009). Their experiences can be impacted by their military responsibilities (e.g. training one weekend per month). In addition to typical concern about academics, NG/R students are on constant alert waiting for deployment orders. Bauman (2009) discussed the three phases that these students experience related to their military obligation: Pre-mobilization, separation, and return.

Pre-mobilization. Pre-mobilization refers to the time prior to mobilization and separation. Bauman (2009) found that these students felt nervous and excited about their future deployment. NG/R students in this phase are typically unsure of when they will deploy. They might feel anxious about dropping classes and leaving their friends and family members.

Separation. Separation begins once these students receive their orders for deployment. They are mobilized, which means they travel to a training site for a few months, then onto their deployment location. Most recently, the deployment locations have been Afghanistan or Iraq.

During separation, they not only have to adjust with being away from their loved ones and friends, they also must adjust to being on active-duty. Bauman (2009) found that the constant state of alertness, and waiting for deployment, was a stressful environment for NG/R student veterans. Nevertheless, soldiers tried to focus on the positive (e.g. family, friends, returning home) while on their combat deployments. Bauman (2009) found that most students in their sample made a "clean break" from their university during the separation phase, and anxiety was eased for NG/R students who were able to maintain a connection with their college while deployed.

Return. Return phase refers to the process that tales place when these NG/R students return home. Bauman (2009) examined the feelings these students dealt with when they returned, and found that their feelings were mixed. NG/R students felt glad to be home yet missed the camaraderie they felt while deployed. Bauman (2009) found that once the rush of homecoming wore off, these veterans were unsure of what to do next. These feelings could be the result of feeling lost when attempting to navigate G.I. Bill process, scheduling classes, and other tasks associated with college attendance.

It is important to note that prior to 9/11, the NG/R operated as a *strategic reserve*; their deployments were limited to no more six months for each five years of inactive drill (i.e. one weekend per month and two weeks during the summer each year), if deployed at all. Since 9/11, the NG/R has been viewed as an *operational force* in which deployments can last up to 24 months with a 24-month rest period before being deployed again (S. A. Edwards, personal communication, October 27, 2012). In this context, many NG/R veterans might have committed to the military prior to 9/11 and as a result, were likely inadequately prepared for such a stark difference in their mission during the Global War on Terror (GWOT) that followed.

Female Veterans

The demographics of the military have changed, especially in regard to gender. In 1973, women made up approximately 2.5 percent of the total active-duty force (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009), but by 2010, the number had increased almost six fold, bringing the total to 15.3 percent. Females also make up 19.6 percent and 15.2 percent of the total force in the Reserves and National Guard respectively (Women in Military Service, 2010). The number of women in the military is dramatically changing, thus the number of female veterans on college campuses is also increasing. It is estimated that 27% of student veterans are women (DVA, 2014). Women have been involved in more combat-type roles as well. Recently, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) announced that women in the military would be able to serve in *official* combat roles (Roulo, 2013). Prior to this announcement, the policy stated that females were unable to be assigned in combat jobs. However, the lines between noncombat and combat jobs have historically been blurred. Women were able to serve in military police (MP) units, as MP's and supportive services, which have served in both Afghanistan and Iraq. "I served alongside women every day while I was in combat. They were exposed to all the same stressors I was exposed to" (J. Krowel, personal communication, April 15, 2011).

Civilians begin their military training with basic training. Specifically, females are thrown into a life of male dominance and they are forced to redefine their femininity (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009). Herbert (1998) affirmed that women in the military felt pressure to act more feminine, more masculine, or both. Because of this constant pressure, some females may play up their femininity while others might engage in more masculine behaviors, such as drinking, swearing, and/or risk-taking behaviors. Herbert (1998) also reported that women were often hesitant in allowing others, especially men, to help them, even in situations where help was

needed, for fear of appearing weak. In a college setting, this might mean that female veterans do not ask for help on assignments. They also may take the lead on group assignments, or take on too many activities or classes.

According to Baechtold and De Sawal (2009), basic training forces service members into a "pre-assigned identity" that is highly valued only within the military community, sometimes referred to as the combat masculine-warrior paradigm (CMW; Dunivin, 1997). The CMW paradigm posits that the preparation for and conduct of war (e.g. combat deployment) is the military's core activity and its primary reason for being. The military has historically been and continues to be comprised of mostly male service members. Dunivin (1997) suggested that the CMW paradigm might be shifting with increased diversity and expansion of women's roles. Until then, female veterans might find the return to civilian life to be especially difficult. Post-military service, women veterans are forced to redefine who they are as a civilian, a veteran, a female, and a student. Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) argued that when female veterans re-enter civilian life, oftentimes they are unsure of how to navigate life as a student and as a woman. While enrolled in college, female veterans often do not find same-gender role models because of the presence of male veterans among faculty and staff. As a result, the transition to college can be difficult for female veterans.

In addition to distinct differences in NG/R and female veteran military culture, student veterans oftentimes find themselves struggling to cope with various mental health issues. The next section will discuss a few that are of particular concern, including PTSD and TBI, comorbidity issues, interpersonal problems, and suicide risk. Additionally, mental health concerns specific to female service members will be discussed.

Mental Health of Student Veterans

Posttraumatic Stress and Other Issues

Many veterans return home with a myriad of mental health issues such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, and/or substance abuse disorders. According to the Center for American Progress (2010), more than 2 million military troops have served in Iraq or Afghanistan. Of those 2 million troops, as many as 35 percent may be experiencing symptoms of PTSD (DVA, 2016). One study found 53 percent of the service members needing treatment for PTSD symptoms actually ended up looking for help. Further, 347,942 service members have sustained a TBI during their military service thus far, with the number almost guaranteed to rise with ongoing deployments (Defense and Veterans, 2016; Hoge, Goldberg, & Castro, 2009). Eighty percent of TBI's sustained in the military are classified as "mild" (mTBI) and common symptoms include fatigue, loss of vision, memory loss, agitation, lack of judgment, regression, and disinhibition (Defense and Veterans, 2012). Unfortunatley, PTSD and TBI may also increase suicide risk in veterans; suicide risk will be discussed later.

Pressure to treat veterans and active-duty service members who suffer from PTSD has come from the numerous accounts of violence, death, and other accidents that have resulted from not being treated promptly and adequately. Soldiers who return with uncontrollable, persistent flashbacks without the resources to cope can become extremely dangerous to themselves and others. According to the Center for American Progress (2010), a Pentagon survey found that one in four soldiers admitted to abusing prescription drugs. In 2011, the percentage of OEF/OIF veterans diagnosed with and treated at a VA hospital for SUD had reached 11% (Seal et al., 2011). As a result, veterans who are returning to college might endorse these symptoms, and might not be receiving the help they need.

Comorbidity

Oftentimes, there are comorbidity issues working against the veteran (e.g. PTSD *and* SUD). According to the American Psychiatric Association (*DSM-IV-TR*) (2000), PTSD is associated with increased rates of other disorders such as Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), SUD, Panic Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), and Social Phobia. Past research suggests that AD veterans experience more symptoms of depression and more suicidal ideation upon returning from combat when compared to National Guard veterans (Milliken, Auchterlonie, & Hoge, 2007). There is also a relationship between PTSD and physical health problems. The appearance of PTSD symptoms is correlated with more doctor visits and more missed workdays (Hoge, Terhakopian, Castro, Messer, & Engel, 2007). Another issue that can be connected to PTSD is intimate partner violence (IPV). Marshall, Panuzio, and Taft (2005) stated that the rates of IPV among veterans and active duty servicemen range from 13.5% to 58%. One reason for such a large range in prevalence is likely due to IPV being grossly underreported by both male and female victims. Furthermore, there is evidence that suggests psychopathology plays a role in IPV perpetration among veterans who also reported experiencing PTSD symptoms (Marshall et al., 2005).

Interpersonal Problems

Veterans have more trouble in their social lives than their civilian counterparts. Twenty percent of married service members were planning a divorce and 42% of returning soldiers and Marines felt like a guest in their own home, according to one study (Center for American Progress, 2008). According to Price and Stevens (2013), male veterans with PTSD report poorer family adjustment than veterans without PTSD that includes higher levels of parenting issues, more anxiety with intimacy, and higher rates of separation and divorce. With soldiers returning

home, feeling this way, and experiencing symptoms of PTSD, it is not surprising to find many veterans that have marital and family problems. Additionally, recently discharged veterans might experience greater difficulty with maintaining employment. A recent report showed at least 75% of veterans disclosed difficulties in effectively using their military skills in civilian jobs, while 61% of employers reported a lack in complete understanding of the qualifications ex-service members could offer their workplace (Center for American Progress, 2010). Employment difficulties vary based on each veteran; however, college or university life could be affected for those who experience unemployment or other employment-related concerns. Sayer et al. (2011) noted that unemployed veterans reported more community reintegration difficulties than employed veterans.

Suicide Risk

Historically, the U.S. military suicide rates have been lower than age-matched civilian rates (Griffith, 2012). However, in 2004, military suicide rates began to rise about civilian rates and by 2008, suicide rates in the military grossly surpassed civilian rates (Griffith, 2012). Data from 22 states suggests that 22 veterans and one active duty service member per day die by suicide, with an overall rate for veterans being 22 per 100,000 (Kemp & Bossarte, 2012). When data from 48 states is considered, the rate is closer to 30 per 100,000 among veterans compared to 14 per 100,000 among civilians (Hargarten, Burnson, Campo, & Cook, 2013). According to Scoville, Garder, and Potter (2004), the most common type of traumatic death suffered during military training is suicide, and male veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide than their nonveteran counterparts (Kaplan, Huguet, McFarland, & Newsom, 2007). Within the general population, “psychological problems” is one of the strongest risk factors for suicide (Harris & Barraclough, 1997), and concern about increased risk of mental disorders among military service

members and veterans (e.g. PTSD, TBI, depression, SUD) has led to concern about increased rates of suicide. Additional risk factors include marital issues, unemployment or financial strain, no support system, and prior suicide attempts (Regan et al., 2005).

Female Veterans

While mental health issues are similar for both male and female veterans, the psychological effects of combat on women are different. According to Baechtold and De Sawal (2009), female veterans are more likely to suffer from PTSD but are less likely to be diagnosed with PTSD than men. According to the DoD (2007), the difference in rates of diagnosis could be based on cultural views that do not easily recognize women as combat forces. Furthermore, women's mental health problems are generally diagnosed as depression or anxiety rather than combat-related PTSD. Females also have the tendency to not define themselves as veterans after they have completed their service. These factors, along with the concern to remain emotionally and psychologically strong can create barriers that prevent women from seeking treatment (DoD, 2007). Similar to the findings of previous research, Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) found that most returning women veterans will not outwardly exhibit signs of mental health issues, but many will struggle with transitioning to civilian life internally.

In general, many college students experience an adjustment period during their first year or two on campus, in which they desire independence but tend to be psychologically dependent on their parents or caregivers. Female college students typically experience more difficulty adjusting to college than their male counterparts. Student veterans experience an adjustment period and, as a group, experience alarming rates of mental health issues compared to nonveteran students (Rudd, Goulding, & Bryan, 2011; Wood, 2012). Additionally, it is possible that female veterans experience greater difficulty in adjusting to college than male veterans, due to the fact

that women serving in the military are forced to navigate a "pre-assigned identity" within the military, and redefining who they are as female might be an additional burden that male student veterans do not experience. As a result of all these issues, it is rational to hypothesize that the level of healthy adjustment to college might also be compromised in the student veteran population.

A Theoretical Framework of College Adjustment for Student Veterans

DiRamio and colleagues (2008) utilized Schlossberg's (1995) theory of adult transition to examine how life experiences shape veteran' expectations of college. Livingston, Havice, Cawthorn, and Fleming (2011) argued that research is needed in facilitating an understanding of the student veteran transition experience. Livingston (2008) and Livingston et al. (2011) also used Schlossberg's theory as a framework to explain this complex process. Others have argued that reintegration issues arise when veterans enroll in college because of culture shock (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007; Carne, 2011; Coll, Weiss, Yarvis, 2011; Glasser, Powers, & Zywiak, 2009). The following sections will discuss Schlossberg's (1995) theory of adult transition and culture shock theory as it pertains to the student veteran population, and how the two theories can be integrated to formulate a theoretical framework for the current study.

Theory of Adult Transition

The construct of transition has been defined as any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012; Chickering & Schlossberg, 2002; Schlossberg, 1989, 2004; Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995). Sargent and Schlossberg (1988) argued that "people in transition are often preoccupied and a little confused" (p. 59), which can result in people feeling vulnerable (Livingston et al., 2011). Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) and Goodman,

Schlossberg, and Anderson (1997) provided a "Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out" model for better understanding transition (see Figure 1). According to the Goodman et al. (1997), "moving in" refers to "becoming familiar with rules, regulations, norms, and expectations of a new system" (p. 167), "moving through" refers to "letting go of former roles and learning new roles" (p. 23), and "moving out" refers to "preparing to transition out of a current role and into another, in a new system" (p. 112). Additionally, the model identifies various factors that impact how individuals cope with transitions and posits that people in transition do the following: evaluate each transition, determine positive and/or negative effects, conduct an inventory of available resources to modify the situation, control the meaning, and manage stress (Schlossberg et al., 1989). According to Schlossberg and colleagues (1989), people in transition manage stress by appraising their own strengths and weaknesses, reaching out to available social supports, and utilizing any coping strategies they may have.

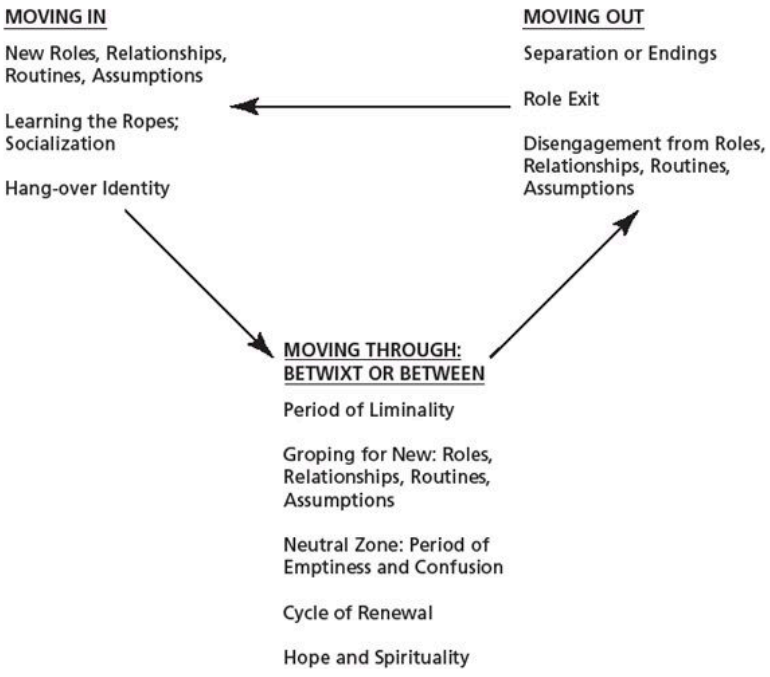

Figure 1. Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out model (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 57).

Student Veterans In Transition

DiRamio and colleagues (2008) adapted the Schlossberg et al. (1989, 1997) "Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out" (p. 80) model to their study examining the transition process for student veterans (see Figure 2). According to DiRamio et al. (2008), their findings "fit neatly into the model" and described the complexities of transitioning student veterans. Similar to Schlossberg et al. (1989, 1997), DiRamio's adapted model focuses on how individuals (in this case, student veterans) experience a change in assumptions about themselves and their behaviors, relationships, and environment. They identified 16 overall themes throughout their model and added an additional "moving in…again" transition that signified transitioning to college.

Moving In. As previously mentioned, "moving in" involves becoming familiar with a new system (Goodman et al., 1997). According to DiRamio et al., "Moving In" to the military encompassed motivation to join the military, getting "called up," and serving overseas.

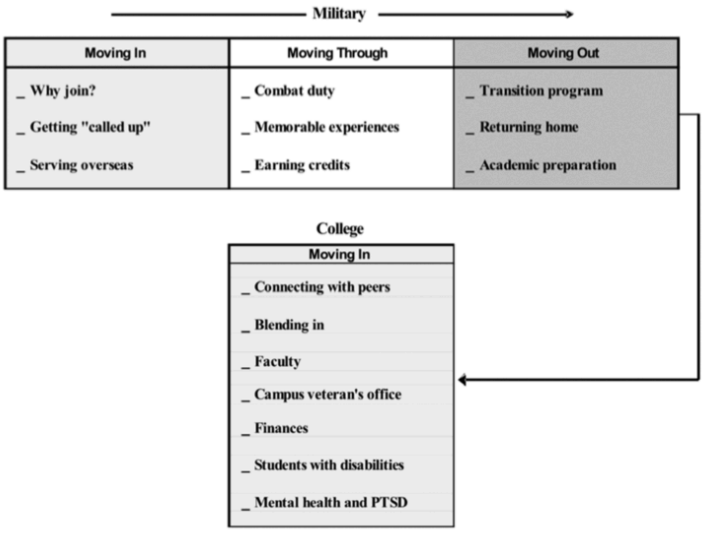

Figure 2. Adapted Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out model for veterans (DiRamio et al., 2008).

In their sample, the primary motivation for joining the military was the 9/11 terrorist attacks and

the sense of patriotism that emerged from that experience. Other reasons for joining the service were family tradition, economic reasons, and educational benefits. With regard to being "called up," this theme was most relevant for NG/R students who received deployment orders while taking classes. For this sample, receiving orders led to frustration when they withdrew from courses. DiRamio et al. (2008) confirmed other research that found student veterans to be more mature than their peers (Livingston, 2009; Livingston et al., 2011).

Moving Through. Goodman et al. (1997) referred to "moving through" as letting go of old roles and learning new ones. DiRamio et al. (2008) found that a major transition was leaving the U.S. and entering a combat zone. Student veterans described the chaos that accompanied their transition, including learning to communicate with a different culture, (threat of) injury, narrowly escaping death themselves, and seeing others die. Those in their sample also reported being interested in receiving college credit for life experiences.

Moving Out. "Moving out" refers to preparing for a transition into a new system (Goodman et al., 1997) and transitioning from one culture (e.g, the U.S. military, combat zone) to another (e.g civilian world, the U.S.) can include feelings of grief and loss (Anderson et al., 2012). In DiRamio and colleagues' (2008) study, the transition from the military to civilian was the most diverse due to each branch and component having their own programs to assist service members. Some experiences were more positive than others but overall returning home was the most challenging. Many of the student veterans in their sample reported that family members do not understand their military and combat experiences, which proved to be quite difficult. Additionally, some veterans entertained volunteering to return to Iraq or re-enlisting into the service in order to be near people who understood them and their experiences. Most veterans reported that academic preparation was lacking in the transition process.

Moving In…Again. The most salient transitional issue that emerged for DiRamio et al.'s (2008) sample was experiencing difficulty with peer and institutional connection. Many veterans reported of a "socialization strategy" (p. 88) called "blending in" (p. 88), in which they attempted to be quiet and neutral. This was especially the case for veterans taking political and social science courses, which tended to bolster feelings of being unwelcomed and out of place (and in one case, being told that American soldiers are terrorists) (DiRamio et al., 2008; Livingston, 2009; Livingston et al., 2011). One recent study found that veterans want to be connected academically, socially, and with campus life but often do not have the tools necessary to find a sense of belonging (NSSE, 2010). Some researchers refer to the totality of these experiences as "culture shock" for student veterans (Black et al., 2007; Carne, 2011; Coll et al., 2011), which will be discussed in the next section.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 2006, p. 142) and has been viewed as part of the process of adapting to a new culture (Adler, 1975; Lundstedt, 1963; Oberg, 1960). Traditionally, culture shock has been applied to individuals who have moved from one country to another; however, researchers have recently examined this phenomenon through the lens of student veterans (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007; Carne, 2011; Coll, Weiss, Yarvis, 2011; Glasser, Powers, & Zywiak, 2009). After all, the military certainly qualifies as its own culture. DiRamio and colleagues' (2008) model adaptation posited that veterans experienced culture shock as a result of leaving the military and re-entering the general population. Carne (2011) argued that student veterans experienced "reverse culture shock" (p. 5) when they reintegrated into the civilian world while transitioning to the college atmosphere. According to Carne, service

members returning home must reconcile newly gained identities, lifestyles, and values with the demands and realities of their home. These individuals may experience withdrawal, feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and interpersonal concerns. Additionally, Anderson and Mason (2009) stated that cultural reintegration may be seen in every area of a returnee's life, including transitions, health, emotions, and home life.

Campus culture (e.g. tempo of academic life, clash of values, faculty attitudes, accessibility issues, collegiate expectations) can be especially difficult for veterans to transition into post-military service. Glasser et al. (2009) found that veterans in their sample felt like they had to change their speech (e.g. cursing), tolerate disrespect in the classroom (e.g. talking/texting during lectures, complaining), and field questions about how many people they killed while in combat (i.e. confirmed kills). Student veterans who have struggled with adapting to the new culture of college will likely also experience great difficulty with college adjustment.

Integrating Adult Transition Theory and Culture Shock Theory

As previously mentioned, the current study will combine adult transition and culture shock theories to provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the college adjustment process of student veterans. Schlossberg et al.'s (1989, 1997) adult transition model and the subsequent adapted model (DiRamio et al., 2008) provide explanation for general transitions and specifically student veterans' transitions. However, culture shock theory might further explain *why* student veterans experience greater difficulty with "Moving In…Again" (DiRamio et al., 2008) of the transition process when reintegrating into civilian life and enrolling in college (Carne, 2011; Coll et al., 2011; Oberg, 1960).

Summary and Rationale

There is a plethora of literature regarding college transition and adjustment for traditional students, and students who identify as racial and ethnic minorities. Few studies have examined military student transitions and adjustment, and fewer studies have looked at current and recent conflicts (e.g. OEF, OIF, OND). Even less research has separated AD student veterans from NG/R veterans. To the author's knowledge, there are no qualitative studies that specifically examined and separated AD and NG/R veteran students. Given that student veterans likely experience unique challenges when enrolling college (e.g. mental health concerns, reintegration issues, culture shock), it is imperative to expand the knowledge base about this population. By doing so, college counselors, administrators, and faculty might better understand how to assist veterans on campus. Moreover, examining college adjustment for student veterans provides an important step toward investigating the generalizability of their specific needs.

Research Questions

As mentioned in the introduction, the current study aims to answer the following research questions: Are there differences in the college adjustment experiences of AD student veterans compared to NG/R student veterans and nonveteran students? Additionally, does the college adjustment experience differ between male and female student veterans of each component? If there are differences in college adjustment, are there unique military experiences that play a role in the transition process (e.g. combat deployments, mental health concerns)? With regard to the proposed research questions, unique life experiences, such as living within the military culture or being deployed to a combat zone, likely impacts how student veterans relate to classmates, faculty, and staff on campus. In addition, life stressors that accompany military discharge and transitioning to the civilian world might affect how student veterans are able to handle the stress

of logistical tasks (e.g. enrolling in courses, navigating financial aid, dropping courses, potential disciplinary actions).

Appendix B – Informed Consent

Study Title Transitioning Student Veterans: An Empirical Analysis of College Adjustment of an Underserved Population on Campus (IRB #722929-1)

Study Purpose and Rationale

While a significant body of literature has been devoted to understanding how young men and women transition to college, there is less emphasis in the literature on how members of the military adjust to college. In the present study, I will attempt to fill a gap in the literature about how veterans adjust to the college atmosphere, and how veterans' experiences differ from the average nonveteran college student. The results of this study will provide important implications for research and practice for an overlooked minority group that is often struggling with mental health and social concerns, in addition to college adjustment issues.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

You are eligible to participate in this study if 1) you are at least 18 years of age, and 2) are currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at a four-year college or university within the United States.

Participation Procedures and Duration

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions about your experience adjusting to college. In addition, you will be asked to complete basic demographic questions, and if you are a veteran, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about basic military history. Please note that you need not have experienced any mental health problems or concerns or have had any counseling experience in order to participate; all responses will provide us with useful information and we want to understand the perspectives of a range of students. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

Data Confidentiality or Anonymity

All data will be maintained as anonymous and no identifying information such as names will appear in any publication or presentation of the data. There will be no way to match a student's identity with their results from the questionnaire.

Storage of Data

Your answers will be kept in a password-protected data file that will only be accessible to members of the research team. The data (raw and final) will be kept indefinitely, which will allow other professionals to re-analyze the data and for future professional development of the principal investigator.

Risks or Discomforts

No physical risk is anticipated from participation in this study. However, there may be psychological risks from your participation in this study due to you feeling uncomfortable

answering some of the questions. At the conclusion of the study, you may have negative feelings about yourself and/or your experiences adjusting to college. Please note that you may choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you may quit the study at any time with absolutely no penalty.

Who to Contact Should You Experience Any Negative Effects from Participating in this Study

Should you experience or develop any uncomfortable feelings during your participation or after your participation in this research project, you may contact the National Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (If you are a veteran, press 1) or text 838255. You will be responsible for any/all costs of care/services that are provided to you as a result of this study wherever that service/care is received.

Benefits

Due to the lack of research in the area of college adjustment, the results are expected to provide better understanding and training for counseling psychologists to be equipped for a variety of adjustment concerns. Additionally, this study will provide you with an opportunity to report your experiences; your perceptions will directly impact the results of this study.

Compensation

The principal investigator will donate $2.00 per completed questionnaire to the Pat Tillman Foundation, a nonprofit organization that invests in military veterans and their spouses through educational scholarships. If you are a Ball State CPSY student, you may receive 1 hour of research credit for a CPSY course by completing this study. There are no other incentives offered.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at anytime for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. The study is designed such that it will be impossible to determine who completed or chose not to complete this study. Please feel free to ask any questions of the investigator at any time during the study.

IRB Contact Information

For questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board: Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070 or irb@bsu.edu.

Researcher Contact Information

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Appendix C – Recruitment Letter

Greetings:

My name is April Krowel and I am an Army veteran and doctoral candidate in the Counseling Psychology Program at Ball State University. I am in the process of collecting data for my dissertation, which examines college adjustment of students and student veterans on campus, and am writing to ask you to assist in my study. The study consists of a 68-item questionnaire as well as demographic questions, which will be completed online, with no perceived risks associated with participation. Participation is open to all undergraduate students at least 18 years old, and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. I will be donating $2.00 for each completed survey to the Pat Tillman Foundation, a nonprofit organization that invests in military veterans and their spouses through educational scholarships. If you are a Ball State CPSY student, you may receive 1 hour of research credit for a CPSY course by completing this study. There are no other incentives offered. If you have any additional questions regarding the study please feel free to ask at any point in time.

Thank you in advance for your help.

April Krowel, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
Dept. of Counseling Psychology and Guidance Services
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

Note: This study has been approved by Ball State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB #722929-1).

Please click the link to complete the survey:
https://bsu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8fh6gks31Qqh9f7

Appendix D – Debriefing Statement

Thank you for completing our study on college adjustment differences between traditional students and student veterans. For those Ball State CPSY students who would like to obtain 1 hour of research credit for taking this questionnaire, please provide detailed information in an email to adkrowel@bsu.edu regarding the name of your course and contact information for your instructor. The principal investigator will inform your instructor, via email, that you completed this questionnaire. For all students, the principal investigator will be donating $2.00 to the Pat Tillman foundation, for your completed survey.

Should you experience or develop any uncomfortable feelings during your participation or after your participation in this research project, you may contact the National Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (If you are a veteran, press 1) or text 838255. You will be responsible for any/all costs of care/services that are provided to you as a result of this study wherever that service/care is received.

If you are interested in learning more about the results of this study or if you would like to be notified of our donation totals, please email the principal investigator at adkrowel@bsu.edu to be added to our mailing list.

Appendix E – Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age?

2. What is your biological sex?
    a. Male
    b. Female

3. What is your race?
    a. White, non-Hispanic
    b. Black or African-American, non-Hispanic
    c. Asian
    d. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
    e. American Indian/Alaskan Native
    f. Two or more races (please specify)
    g. Other (please specify)

4. Are you of Hispanic/Latino(a) descent?
    a. Yes (please specify)
    b. No

5. What is your relationship status?
    a. Single
    b. In a committed relationship, but not married
    c. Married
    d. Separated
    e. Divorced
    f. Widowed

6. Are you a parent?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. I am or my partner is currently pregnant

7. Do you identify as having a disability?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    If so, please elaborate.

8. What is your yearly income?

9. What is the name of your college/university?

10. Do you attend college on campus?
    a. Yes
    b. No, I am enrolled in online courses

    c. I am enrolled in both on-campus and online courses?

11. What is your GPA?

12. Is this your first semester of college?
    a. Yes, this is my first semester
    b. No, I have completed at least one semester but not more than two semesters
    c. No, I have completed more than two semesters

13. How many credits have you completed?

14. Are you a first generation college student?
    a. Yes
    b. No

15. What is your primary reason for enrolling in college?

Appendix F – Veterans Questionnaire

1. Are you currently serving in the military or identify as a veteran?
    a. Yes
    b. No

2. In what branch of the military did/do you serve?
    a. Army
    b. Navy
    c. Marine Corps
    d. Air Force
    e. Coast Guard

3. In what component did/do you serve?
    a. Active Duty
    b. National Guard
    c. Reserves
    d. ROTC

4. What was your pay grade at discharge? If you are still serving, what is your current pay grade?

5. What was/is your MOS?

6. What was/is your primary motivation for joining the military?

7. Were/are your parents in the military?

8. Have you been deployed?
    a. Yes
    b. No

9. How many times have you deployed?
    a. Once
    b. Twice
    c. Three times
    d. Four or more times

10. Are you an OEF/OIF/OND veteran?
    a. Yes
    b. No

11. In what country was your most recent deployment?

12. How long have you been back in the U.S. since your last deployment?

13. Did you anticipate or face any adjustments in attending college after serving in combat?
    a. Yes
    b. No

    If so, please elaborate.

14. Has your military experience shaped the way you feel about college?

15. Have you talked with other students or with faculty members about your military service?

16. Do you bring up your military service in classroom discussions?

17. How do other students and faculty members respond to your wartime experiences?

18. Do you know other veterans on campus?
    a. Yes
    b. No

19. If you do know other veterans on campus, do you ever get together with them? What do those relationships mean to you?

20. What needs to happen so your campus is better prepared to enroll veterans as students?

21. What campus services or support systems not yet available would help veterans, as they become college students?

22. What are your experiences with your campus veteran's office?

23. Have you utilized campus resources, such as disability or counseling services? If so, what were your experiences?

24. Do you consider your university/college a "veteran-friendly" campus?
    a. Yes
    b. No

25. What makes your university/college "veteran-friendly"?

Appendix G – Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

Below are several statements, which will apply to you in greater or lesser degree. Each has beneath it a continuum of options labeled "Applies very closely to me" at one end and "Doesn't apply to me at all" at the other end. Please choose an option at the point in the continuum which best represents your judgement concerning how closely the statement applies to you AT THE PRESENT TIME, i.e. WITHIN THE LAST FEW DAYS. Since your judgment may vary considerably from item to item, you should feel free to use any one of the options in the continuum.

As an example, if you felt that a statement applied very closely to you, you would choose the option at point "A"; if less closely, at point "B"; if not very closely, at point "C"; if not at all, at point "D"; etc. Please remember that you can choose any option at any point in each continuum but NO MORE THAN ONE option in each continuum.

Please be sure to complete the entire questionnaire. Be just as frank and honest as possible; your answers will be accorded strict professional confidentiality. If you choose to do so, you may change an answer.

1. I feel that I fit well as part of the college or university environment.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

2. I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

3. I have been keeping up to date on my academic work.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

4. I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends, as I would like at my college or university.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

5. I know why I'm in college and what I want out of it.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

6. I am finding academic work at my college or university difficult.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

7. Lately I have been feeling blue and moody a lot.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

8. I am very involved with social activities in college.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

9. I am adjusting well to college.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

10. I have not been functioning well during examinations.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

11. I have felt tired much of the time lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

12. Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

13. I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

14. I have had informal, personal contacts with my college professors.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

15. I am pleased now about my decision to go to college.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

16. I am not pleased about my decision to attend my college or university in particular.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

17. I'm not working as hard as I should at my coursework.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

18. I have several close social ties at my college or university.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

19. My academic goals and purposes are well-defined.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

20. I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

21. I'm not really smart enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

22. Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

23. Getting a college degree is very important to me.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

24. My appetite has been good lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

25. I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

26. I enjoy living in a college dormitory (please omit if you do not live in a dormitory; any University housing should be regarded as a dormitory).

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

27. I enjoy writing papers for courses.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

28. I have been having a lot of headaches lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

29. I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

30. I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at my college or university.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

31. I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Counseling Psychological Services Center, or from a psychotherapist outside of my college or university.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

32. Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a college education.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

33. I am getting along very well with my roommate(s) at my college or university (please omit if you do not have a roommate).

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

34. Choose B if you are reading this item.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

35. I wish I were at another college or university rather than the one I chose.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

36. I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

37. I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at my college or university.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

38. I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the college setting.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

39. I have been getting angry too easily lately.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

40. Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

41. I haven't been sleeping very well.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

42. I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

43. I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at my college or university.

A			B			C		D
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

44. I am satisfied with the quality or the caliber of courses available at my college or university.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

45. I am attending classes regularly.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

46. Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

47. I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at my college or university.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

48. I expect to stay at my college or university for a bachelor's degree.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

49. I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

50. I worry a lot about my college expenses.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

51. I am enjoying my academic work at college.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

52. I have been feeling lonely a lot at my college or university lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

53. I am having a lot of trouble getting started on homework assignments.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

54. I feel I have good control over my life situation at my college or university.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

55. I am satisfied with my program of courses for this semester.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

56. I have been feeling in good health lately.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

57. I feel I am very different from other students at my college or university, in ways that I don't like.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

58. On balance, I would rather be home than here.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

59. Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my coursework at my college or university.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

60. Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another college.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

61. Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to dropping out of college altogether and for good.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

62. I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from college and finishing later.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

63. I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn't apply to me at all

64. I have some good friends or acquaintances at my college or university who I can talk with about any problems I may have.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

65. I am expecting a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me in college.

A B C D
* * * * * * * * *

Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

66. I am quite satisfied with my social life at my college or university.

A B C D
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Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

67. I'm quite satisfied with my academic situation at my college or university.

A B C D
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Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all

68. I feel confident that I will be able to deal in a satisfactory manner with future challenges here at my college or university.

A B C D
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Applies very close to me Doesn’t apply to me at all